

Snow chains

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Please note: VicRoads provides the following for information purposes only. All inquiries regarding the regulations included here should be directed to the [Department of Sustainability and Environment \(DSE\)](#).

What are the rules regarding snow chains?

Snow chains must be fitted when directed to by the authorities in the snow fields.

The Alpine Resorts (Management) Regulations 2009 outline the following:

1. A person in charge of a vehicle who enters an alpine resort must at all times during the snow season, carry wheel chains suitable to be properly fitted to that vehicle.

Penalty: 20 penalty units.

2. An authorised officer may, at any time, for reasons of safety or for the control or protection of an alpine resort, direct a person in charge of a vehicle to ensure that wheel chains are properly fitted to the drive wheels of that vehicle or, in the case of four wheel drive vehicle, to either the front or rear wheels of that vehicle.
3. A person in charge of a vehicle entering or in an alpine resort during the snow season must, when directed to do so by an authorised officer under sub-regulation (2), ensure that wheel chains are properly fitted to the vehicle in the manner directed by that officer.

Penalty: 20 penalty units.

In 2011–12, one penalty unit is \$122.14

Are four-wheel drive vehicles exempt from fitting chains during the snow season?

Four-wheel drive vehicles can generally travel further in the snow than two-wheel drive vehicles and depending on the conditions, signs generally exempt them from fitting chains. However, in heavy snow conditions four-wheel drive vehicles can still reach a point where snow chains will become necessary for them to continue driving. This will be dictated by the conditions and the level of snow. If necessary refer to the manufacturer's recommendations and requirements concerning the vehicle's capabilities and suitable tyres.

What should drivers do?

Drivers should carry chains at all times and fit them when directed.

If there is any doubt about the capability of your vehicle, it is better to be safe than sorry and fit chains.

It is important that drivers take responsibility for their safety and seek professional advice about their vehicle.

Where can drivers get advice about their vehicle?

As the first point of reference, drivers should refer to their owner's handbooks. Drivers could also consult with the vehicle manufacturers via customer support.

More information

For more information on snow safety, including tips for driving in the snow, visit the [Snowsafe website](#).

For information relating to the regulations associated with snow chains, visit the [Department of Sustainability and Environment \(DSE\) website](#)

Key points to remember:

- Snow chains must be carried at all times during the snow season.
- Remember to slow down when driving in the snow or icy conditions. Driving on snow or ice is significantly different from driving on normal, dry, road surfaces. Overlooking the differences between driving in the snow and on a normal dry surface is what can bring people unstuck.
- Drivers should be prepared to fit snow chains to their car when directed by authorities. Generally signs give the required directions.
- Ensure that the snow chains that are being carried will fit your vehicle and you are able to fit them before beginning your journey.
- The capability of any vehicle without chains depends on a number of factors including road and weather conditions, tyre grip and vehicle type.
- Drivers should seek advice from the manufacturer about the capability of their vehicles before they embark on their trip.
- When in doubt, it is safer to fit chains than to drive without.
- Penalties can apply if caught without snow chains. Perhaps the worst penalty though is potentially ruining your holiday as a result of being turned away from the snow fields, becoming bogged in the snow, or even worse, having an accident as a result of failing to fit snow chains.